



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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JUDI E. THOMAS

August 28, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM:

Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **HOLY FAMILY SERVICES ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE AGENCY
CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Holy Family Services Adoption and Foster Care Agency (Holy Family or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with Holy Family, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Holy Family is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and the foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of four certified foster homes in which five DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Holy Family is located in the First District.

DCFS pays Holy Family a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Holy Family receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790

per month, per child. DCFS paid Holy Family approximately \$140,000 during Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Holy Family was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed the Agency's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The children appeared happy and well cared for and indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Holy Family also ensured that their social workers visited the children the required number of times. In addition, the Agency ensured that staff working on the County contract possessed the education and work experience required and that their social workers' caseload did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations. However, Holy Family did not always comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- The foster parents we interviewed indicated that Holy Family was not always providing the counseling, support and education necessary to make decisions and transitions related to adoption.
- None of the two foster homes visited adequately secured kitchen knives.
- None of the two foster homes visited were conducting disaster drills with the children at least every six months as required.
- One of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain current copies of the foster parent's driver's license or automobile insurance. Subsequent to our review, Holy Family provided the required documentation.
- None of the three Needs and Services Plans reviewed contained goals that were specific and individualized to the children.
- The one child taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication. The most recent court authorization for the child expired two months prior to our review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with Holy Family on June 29, 2009. In their attached response, Holy Family indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations (Attachment I). We also notified DCFS of the results of our review. In their response (Attachment II), DCFS indicates they will follow up on our recommendations during their next monitoring review tentatively scheduled for September 2009.

We thank Holy Family for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Joseph Zanetta, Chair, Board of Directors, Holy Family FFA
Debra E. Richardson, Executive Director, Holy Family FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
HOLY FAMILY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2008-09**

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Holy Family Adoption Services and Foster Care Agency (Holy Family or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited two of the four Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Holy Family billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in July and August 2008, and interviewed four foster parents and two of the three children placed in the two homes. We also observed one toddler who was too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for four foster parents and three children and reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The children appeared happy and well cared for and indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, the Agency's social worker visited the children the required number of times.

Holy Family needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The Agency also needs to ensure that foster parent certification files and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) contain all the required information and that children taking psychotropic medications have a current court authorization for the administration of the medications. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitation

- None of the two foster homes visited adequately secured kitchen knives.
- None of the two foster homes visited were conducting disaster drills with the children at least every six months as required.

Foster Parent Certification Files

- One (25%) of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain current copies of the foster parent's driver's license or automobile insurance. Subsequent to our review, Holy Family provided the required documentation.

Needs and Services Plans and Medical Services

- None of the three NSPs reviewed contained goals that were specific and individualized to the children.
- The one child taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication. The most recent court authorization for the child expired two months prior to our review.

Recommendations**Holy Family management ensure:**

1. **Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**
2. **Foster parents adequately secure knives and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.**
3. **Foster parents conduct and document disaster drills with foster children upon placement and every six months thereafter.**
4. **Foster parent certification files contain all the required information including documentation of current driver's licenses and automobile insurance.**
5. **NSPs contain goals that are specific and individualized to the children.**
6. **Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION**Objective**

To determine whether the program participants received the services that Holy Family billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed two children placed in two Holy Family certified foster homes and four foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. In addition, we observed one toddler who was too young to interview.

Results

The foster children interviewed indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the toddler appeared well cared for and happy. However, the foster parents indicated that the Agency was not always providing the counseling, support and education necessary in making decisions and transitions related to adoption.

Recommendation

7. **Holy Family management ensure that foster parents are provided the counseling, support and education necessary to make decisions and transitions related to adoption.**

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Determine whether Holy Family social workers' caseloads do not exceed fifteen placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed Holy Family's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social worker and administrator.

Results

The Agency's social worker carried an average caseload of five cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised one social worker.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Holy Family staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

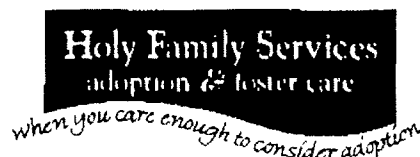
We interviewed the Agency's administrator and reviewed the social workers' personnel files for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearance and ongoing training.

Results

Holy Family's administrator, supervising social worker and social worker possessed the education and work experience required. In addition, the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training to staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

None.



July 10, 2009

Department of Auditor-Controller
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple Street, Room 525
Los Angeles, CA 90012
FAX (213) 897-5963

Attn: Brian Henricks, Foster Family Agency Audit Supervisor

RE: Corrective Action Plan for Holy Family Services, adoption & foster care
Lic. No. 197805291

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.
2. Foster parents adequately secure knives and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.
3. Foster parents conduct and document disaster drills with foster children upon placement and every six months thereafter.
4. Foster parent certification files contain all the required information including documentation of current driver's licenses and automobile insurance.
5. NSPs contain goals that are specific and individualized to the children.
6. Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN:

The corrective action plan for these recommendations is combined because they all reflect the compliance with Los Angeles County Contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Although the Foster homes were substantially in compliance and the children appeared to be very happy and well cared for, there were several administrative deficiencies.

The following immediate steps were taken:

☒ **LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

PO Box 26368
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 202-3900 • (213) 202-3942 fax

HF5Adopt@aol.com • www.hfs.org

☒ **ORANGE COUNTY**

PO Box 9
Placentia, CA 92871
(714) 528-6300 • (714) 528-6305 fax

☒ **VENTURA COUNTY**

80 Hillcrest Drive, Suite 206
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
(805) 374-6797 • (805) 379-3088 fax

☒ **INLAND EMPIRE**

1441 North "D" Street, Suite 201
San Bernardino, CA 92404
(909) 885-4882 • (909) 888-7065 fax

A state-licensed, non-denominational, nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency providing counseling, adoption, foster care and related family services

The social work staff has asked all foster parents to secure all knives and other objects that could pose a potential safety hazard to children and it has been reported that this has been done.

The audited foster families as well as current foster parents were instructed to complete disaster drills with foster children upon placement of foster children and every six months thereafter.

The missing driver's license and automobile insurance from the foster parent's file was obtained by the social worker and placed in the file.

Holy Family Services has begun using the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services' template for the Needs and Services Plans.

The missing Court authorization was received for the administration of psychotropic medication and placed in the child's file.

In order to ensure that Holy Family Services is in long-term compliance with the County Contract and CDSS Title 22 Regulations the following steps were taken:

The policy for Disaster Drills and the form to record disaster drills has been mailed to all foster parents with a request for receipt. In the future, the policy and the form for recording drills will be given to all foster parents during training and to all staff upon hire. In addition, the policy and the form for recording disaster drills will be given to foster parents upon placement of child/children.

The Needs and Services Plans for all foster care children will be developed using the Los Angeles County template. In addition, the Needs and Services Plans will be developed at the quarterly reviews.

All foster care personnel will be given the regulation regarding knives and other items and the visitation form has been altered to reflect documentation on each visit that the foster home is in compliance with this policy. The foster care personnel will continue to complete the Health and Safety Check List per contract.

A Check List of the required documentation for all Certified parents has been developed. The foster care personnel will review the checklist on a quarterly basis and will inform foster parents of the needed documentation including driver's license and automobile insurance.

The foster/adopt supervisor or designee will review all children's files that are on psychotropic medication to ensure that the court authorization for administration of psychotropic medication is in the file and is current. This will be done on a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDATION:

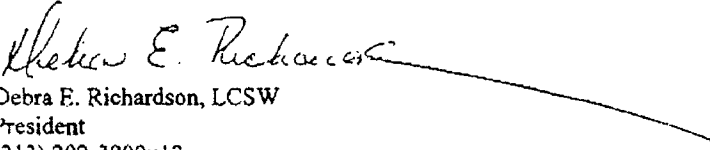
Holy Family Services management ensure that foster parents are provided the counseling, support, and education in making decisions and transitions related to adoption.

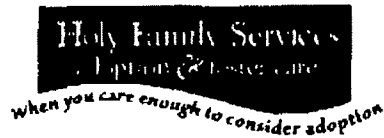
Corrective Action Plan:

Although the management of Holy Family Services thinks that the foster parents at Holy Family Services are being provided counseling, support, and education in making decisions and transitions related to adoption, the parents interviewed during the audit did not think so. The foster care personnel at Holy Family Services will document all referrals/services that are made in regards to the above areas. The administrator for the program or a designee will attend all of quarterly reviews and will discuss with families their need for resources and/or services. Any referrals/services made will be documented on the Needs and Services Plans/Quarterly Report.

Attached:

Memo to Foster Care Personnel and Foster Parents
Disaster Drill Form
Visitation Case Notes
Certified Parent Documentation Check List


Debra E. Richardson, LCSW
President
(213) 202-3900x12
Fax (213) 202-3943



MEMO

DATE: July 10, 2009
TO: All Foster Care Personnel and Foster Parents
FROM: Debra E. Richardson, LCSW
RE: Disaster Drills
CC: Copy to File of foster parents

Disaster Drills must be completed upon placement of children and every six months thereafter. This policy is in effect until the status of foster care parent changes.

Please sign one copy of this memo and return copy to your social worker to indicate that you have read and understand this policy.

Foster Parent/Staff Signature

Date

Foster Parent/Staff Signature

Date

Date form received by
Social Worker/Supervisor

Social Worker/Supervisor Signature



FOSTER FAMILY _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

DISASTER DRILL RECORD

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

☐ LOS ANGELES COUNTY

P.O. Box 26368
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San Bernardino, CA 92405
(909) 485-0882 • (909) 859-7065 fax



VISITATION CASE NOTES

Date: _____ Case #: _____

Foster Family Name: _____ Children : (1) _____

(2) _____ (3) _____ (4) _____

Others Present: _____

Family Integration: _____

Emotional/Behavioral/Developmental/Social Challenges and/or Progress: _____

Recreational/Educational/Developmental Activities: _____

Medical/Dental/Psychological Treatment: _____

Nutrition/Hygiene/Clothing: _____

HFS-SW Assessment and Evaluation: _____

Compliance with CDSS Title 22 Regulations regarding safety: _____

Other: _____

Referrals and/or Change in Treatment Plan: _____

Social Worker: _____ Direct Service Hours: _____



Certified Parent Documentation Check List

Foster Family: _____ Social Worker: _____

Certification Date/Previous Certification Date: _____

Certification/Re-Certification Date: _____

Form/Issue	Expiration date	Update needed?	Completed
CPR			
First Aid			
Vehicle Safety Check			
CDL			
Auto Insurance			
Home Insurance			
Seat belt Form			
Changes in family constellation			
Change in address			
Change in health			
Home Safety Check			
Education hours completed (12/20/yr)			



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director


**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5802

August 4, 2009

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Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM:  Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out of Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF HOLY
FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) has reviewed the Auditor-Controller's (A-C) July 14, 2009 final draft report of the contract compliance review of Holy Family Services FFA. Although the report notes several programmatic issues, there were no safety issues which require an immediate response from DCFS.

We will conduct a follow-up review based on the A-C's recommendations, which is tentatively scheduled for September 28, 2009.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

MG:EAH:CR

c: Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Lisa Perrish, Deputy Director, DCFS
Marilynne Garrison, Division Chief, DCFS

